

What is claimed is:

1. A method of using a centrifuge to separate a light material that is within an input mixture from a heavy material that is within the input mixture, while at the same time independently controlling a speed of rotation of the centrifuge and a speed of removal of the heavy material from the centrifuge, comprising the steps of:

5 providing a first and a second arm assembly aligned on an arm-axis and that are rotatable in a plane extending generally perpendicular to a rotation-axis;

providing that each of said first and second arm assemblies includes a tubular-housing having a closed outer end, an intermediate tube having an open outer end, and an inner tube having an open outer end;

10 providing that said inner tube of each arm assembly is of a given length;

providing that said intermediate tube of each arm assembly is of a length that is less than said given length;

15 providing that an outer end of said tubular-housing of each arm assembly is spaced from said outer end of said intermediate tube and from said outer end of said inner tube;

providing an input mixture flow path that communicates with a cylindrical space between said intermediate tube and said inner tube of each arm assembly;

20 providing a heavy material flow path that communicates with a space within said inner tube of each arm assembly;

providing a light material flow path that communicates with a cylindrical space between said intermediate tube and said tubular-housing of each arm assembly;

5 providing a conveyer screw within the inner tube of each arm assembly;

providing first speed controllable drive means connected to effect rotation of said first and second arm assemblies about said rotation-axis; and

providing second speed controllable drive means connected to effect rotation of said conveyer screws.

10 2. The method of claim 1 wherein said first speed-controllable drive means is an electric motor and wherein said second speed-controllable drive means is a hydraulic motor.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein said rotation-axis extends in a horizontal direction.

15 4. In a centrifuge wherein a light material within an input mixture is separated from a heavy material within the input mixture, the centrifuge including a first and a second axially aligned arm assembly rotatable in a plane that extends generally perpendicular to an axis of rotation, wherein each of the first and second arm assemblies includes a tubular-housing having a closed outer end, an intermediate
20 tube having an open outer end, and an inner tube having an open outer end, wherein the inner tube of each arm assembly is of a given length, wherein the intermediate tube of each arm assembly is of a length that is less than the inner tube, wherein the outer end of the tubular-housing of each arm assembly is spaced from the outer end of the intermediate tube and from the outer end of the inner tube, wherein an input
25 mixture input-flow-path communicates with a space between the intermediate tube and the inner tube of each arm assembly, wherein a heavy material output-flow-path

communicates with a space within the inner tube of each arm assembly, and wherein a light material output-flow-path communicates with a space between the intermediate tube and the tubular-housing of each arm assembly, a method of mounting the inner ends of the tubular-housing, the intermediate tube and the inner tube of each arm assembly to a central member that rotates about the axis of rotation, comprising the steps of:

securing the inner end of the tubular-housing of each arm assembly to opposite sides of the central member,

providing a first mounting ring on the inner end of the tubular housing of each arm assembly, the first mounting ring having an inward-facing portion;

providing a second mounting ring on an inner end of the intermediate tube of each arm assembly, the second mounting ring having an inward-facing portion, and the second mounting ring having an outward facing portion secured to the inward-facing portion of the first mounting ring; and

providing a third mounting ring on an inner end of the inner tube of each arm assembly, the third mounting ring having an inward-facing portion secured to the outward-facing portion of the second mounting ring.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein and the outward facing portion of the second mounting ring physically underlies the inward-facing portion of the first mounting ring, and wherein the outward-facing portion of the second mounting ring overlies the inward-facing portion of the third mounting ring.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the axis of rotation is a horizontal axis.

7. A system for oxidizing materials, said system comprising:

an entry zone;

a thickening zone;

a reaction zone;

a cooling zone; and

an exit zone.

5 8. The system in claim 7, wherein:

 said entry zone is contained in a centrifuge influent manifold in a
portion of a centrifuge arm adjacent to said influent manifold.

 9. The system in claim 7, wherein:

10 said reaction zone is contained in an outer chamber of a centrifuge
arm.

 10. The system in claim 7, wherein:

 said cooling zone is contained in a center channel of a centrifuge arm.

 11. The system in claim 7, wherein:

 said exit zone is contained in an effluent manifold in a centrifuge.

15 12. The system in claim 9, wherein:

 a cooling tube injects cooling water into said reaction zone.

 13. The system in claim 12, wherein:

 said cooling tube can be manually adjusted along the length of said
centrifuge arm.

20 14. The system in claim 12, wherein:

said cooling tube automatically adjusts in relation to the pressures within said cooling zone.

15. The system in claim 7, wherein:

an oxidant is injected into said reaction zone.

5 16. The system in claim 7, wherein:

a centrate flows out of said thickening zone.

17. A method for oxidizing materials, said method comprising the following steps

providing an influent material;

10 passing said influent material through an entry zone;

passing said influent material through a reaction zone;

passing said influent material through a cooling zone; and

passing said influent material through an exit zone.

18. The method in claim 17, wherein:

15 said entry zone is contained in a centrifuge influent manifold in a portion of a centrifuge arm adjacent to said influent manifold.

19. The method in claim 17, wherein:

said reaction zone is contained in an outer chamber of a centrifuge arm.

20 20. The method in claim 17, wherein:

said cooling zone is contained in a center channel of a centrifuge arm.

21. The method in claim 17, wherein:

said exit zone is contained in an effluent manifold in a centrifuge.

22. The method in claim 19, wherein:

5 a cooling tube injects cooling water into said reaction zone.

23. The method in claim 22, wherein:

said cooling tube can be manually adjusted along the length of said
centrifuge arm.

24. The method in claim 22, wherein:

10 said cooling tube automatically adjusts in relation to the pressures
within said cooling zone.

25. The system in claim 22, wherein:

an oxidant is injected into said reaction zone.

26. The system in claim 22, wherein:

15 a centrate flows out of said thickening zone.

27. An oxidation reactor for processing an incoming material, said reactor
comprising:

a main body having at least one inlet and at least one outlet and being
rotatable about an axis;

at least one hollow arm extending from said main body, said arm having a distal end and a proximal end, said arm defining at least an interior inlet flow path communicating with and leading from said inlet at said proximal end outwardly to said distal end, and at least a first exit flow path leading from said distal end to said proximal end and communicating with said outlet, and a heat source at said distal end;
5 and

a reactor region formed at said distal end of said arm.

28. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 27, further comprising a flow path for inserting an oxidant into to said reactor region.

10 29. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 27, further comprising:

a second exit flow path leading to a second outlet;

said first exit flow path for the flow of the incoming material after passing through said reactor region;

15 said second exit flow path for liquid separated from the incoming material.

30. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 28, wherein:

said second outlet is closed.

31. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 27, wherein:

said heat source is an electrode.

20 32. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 27, wherein:

said heat source is a resistive heat element.

33. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 27, wherein said heat source is an electro-magnetic heat source.

34. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 27, wherein:

5 said heat source is capable of heating the reactor region to a temperature of approximately 705 degrees F.

35. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 27, wherein said distal end is formed by a tubular end cap which encompasses the reactor region.

36. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 35 wherein said heat source at least in part surrounds said end cap.

10 37. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 28, wherein said oxidant flow path outputs into to said reactor zone.

38. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 37, wherein said oxidant flow path includes at least one separate injectors positioned in the outer wall of said arm.

15 39. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 37, wherein said oxidant flow path extends interior to said arm to output into said reactor region.

40. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 27, further comprising an auger positioned in said first exit path.

41. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 40, wherein said auger forms a choke along its length to assist in controlling the pressure in said reactor region.

20 42. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 27, further comprising a probe positioned in said first exit flow path.

43. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 42, wherein said probe defines a choke along its length to assist in controlling a pressure in said reactor region.

44. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 43, wherein said probe is adjustable along the length of said first exit flow path.

45. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 42, wherein said probe is a fluid conduit and defines at least one outlet aperture adjacent one end.

5 46. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 40, wherein said probe is a fluid conduit and defines at least one outlet aperture adjacent said choke.

47. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 43, wherein said choke is an enlarged portion formed on a distal end of said probe.

10 48. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 27, wherein said outlet is into a fluid.

49. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 27, wherein said outlet is into a fluid in a closed container.

50. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 49, wherein a fluid level of said fluid in said container affects a back pressure applied to said reactor region.

15 51. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 49, wherein said closed container includes a gas layer above said fluid.

52. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 50, wherein said fluid level can be adjusted in said container to increase or decrease a back pressure on said reaction zone.

20 53. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 27, wherein said main body rotates about a vertical axis.

54. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 53, further comprising a frame for suspending said main body in a manner to allow said main body to rotate about said vertical axis.

55. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 54, further comprising a tank
5 mounted to the bottom of said frame, into which said outlet extends.

56. An oxidation reactor for processing an incoming material, said reactor comprising:

a main body having at least one inlet and at least one outlet and being rotatable about an axis;

10 at least two opposing hollow arms extending from said main body, each of said arms having a distal end and a proximal end, said arm defining at least an interior inlet flow path communicating with and leading from said inlet at said proximal end outwardly to said distal end, and at least a first exit flow path leading from said distal end to said proximal end and communicating with said outlet, and a
15 heat source at said distal end; and

a reactor region formed at said distal end of each of said arms.

57. A rotating centrifuge for performing an oxidation reaction on a sludge, the centrifuge comprising:

20 a housing having a central body and a hollow arm extending from said body, said arm having a first end attached to said central body, and a second end extending away from said central body, and an end cap attached to said second end of said arm to form a chamber in said arm, said distal end of said chamber being selectively heated;

25 a baffle attached to said body and extending into said chamber, said baffle having a longer inner tube having an interior and a distal end, and a shorter

outer tube, said longer tube positioned inside said shorter tube and defining an inner space therebetween;

an outer space defined between said shorter tube and said hollow arm;

an entrance path for the mixture of initial material formed in said housing and communicating with said inner space;

a gas inlet channel in the centrifuge to diffuse gas into the heavier material;

an exit path for said light material formed in said housing and communicating with said outer space;

an exit path for said heavier material formed in said housing and including the interior of said longer tube; and

wherein a plug is formed in said chamber adjacent said end cap to engage said distal end of said longer tube and thereby define a flow path to guide said lighter material to said exit path for said lighter material, and said heat and combustible gas combining with the pressure on said heavier material to cause a oxidation reaction to occur.

58. An oxidation reactor for processing waste products comprising:

a centrifuge having a heated portion forming a reaction zone; and

a gas inlet to mix a gas with the waste product.

59. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 58, wherein:

said centrifuge includes a housing having a central body and a hollow arm extending from said body, said arm having a first end attached to said central body, and a second end extending away from said central body, and an end cap

attached to said second end of said arm to form a chamber in said arm, said distal end of said chamber being selectively heated to form the reaction chamber.

60. An oxidation reactor as defined in claim 59, further comprising:

5 a baffle attached to said body and extending into said chamber, said baffle having a longer inner tube having an interior and a distal end, and a shorter outer tube, said longer tube positioned inside said shorter tube and defining an inner space therebetween;

an outer space defined between said shorter tube and said hollow arm;

10 an entrance path for the mixture of initial material formed in said housing and communicating with said inner space;

a gas inlet channel in the centrifuge to diffuse gas into the heavier material;

an exit path for said light material formed in said housing and communicating with said outer space; and

15 an exit path for said heavier material formed in said housing and including the interior of said longer tube.